

A pencil sketch of a landscape. In the foreground, a figure is walking towards the right. In the middle ground, there is a building with a dome and a tower. The background shows a hilly landscape with a fence or path. The text is overlaid on the sketch.

A  
Pilgrimage  
to  
Jerusalem

by  
Stephen M.  
Berer

*A Pilgrimage to Jerusalem.*

*Fragment of a letter from*

*a pilgrim to his Rebbe.*

*Translated out of Yiddish from  
a fragment discovered in the  
library at Yivo, 1977, the text  
probably originating in  
Ruthenia. Tentatively dated:  
mid to late 18th century.*

*A Note To The Reader:*

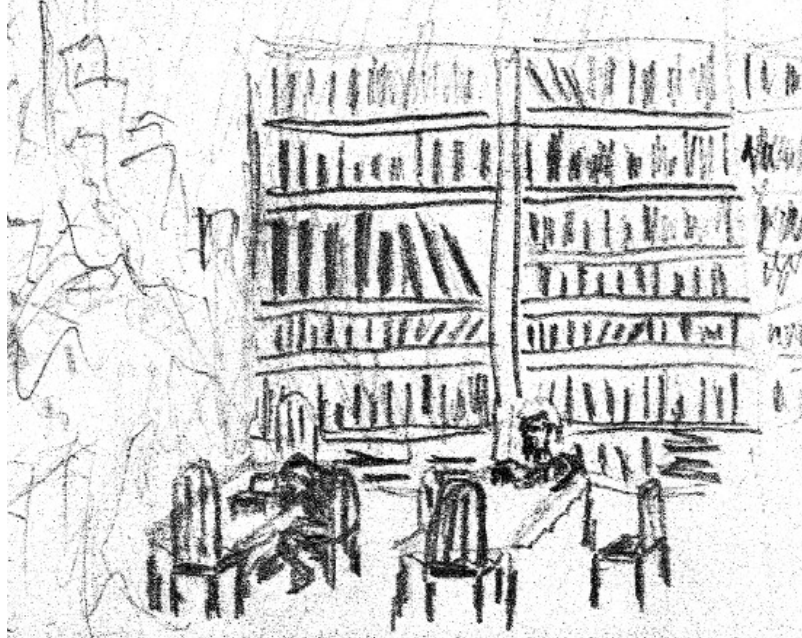
*I request the reader's indulgence for the minor spelling aberrations of the text.*

*They serve, coincidentally, two distinct purposes: 1. they attempt to express the somewhat strange and archaic or abnormal Yiddish constructions that flavor the original, as might be expected from an extremely early Yiddish text; 2. they allow me to partially bring to the general public the technical experiments that I am developing more fully in my Poetry. If it were not for the first reason, such alterations from the norm might appear superfluous or detrimental to this particular piece.*

*However, dear reader, please be careful before judging; what may appear as shallow water, rapid and rocky, is, in fact, a deep and powerful current.*

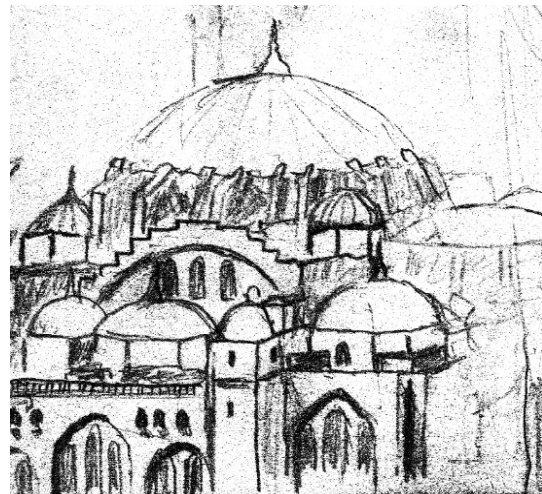
*S.M.B.*

...However, I have heard rumors by sinful and ignorant apostates about Jerusalem.



Is not Jerusalem the Holy City, the Garden of Paradise in Ertha, the Sanctuary of the lowly worlds? Does not the City of Divine Grace remain forever the ultimate oasis because of one Law: all beings, however lowly, may *at any time* enter the holy city, but no being, however exalted, may *ever* return from the mystic confines? All the Chassidim have taught that the outer worlds, man fallen from Grace, may never know what the inner sanctuary is like, so one must believe Chazal when they say: "He who enters is redeemed; beyond the threshold is beyond Fate."

But with deceit and evil magic



the apostates have shot arrows of doubt into the truest believers' minds. It must be this doubt that delays all the worlds from immediate pilgrimage to the heart of hearts. And though I, for one, am certain of the falsehood of these foul heresies, for the sake of true belief I expose the most blatant of them to the Light of Day, in the hope that, like the devil who hung himself at the sight of the Sun, the light of Rezen will destroy them forever. May we all enter Paradise in this lifetime!!



As all true Chassidim I had always looked to Jerusalem for inspiration, and prayed to Jerusalem for perfection. Recently, myself and a



few of my fellow students made pilgrimage to Jerusalem for that ultimate salvation.

We spied Jerusalem from a great distance as it appeared and disappeared between the shifting hills. Even from 4 parasongs we were awed by its immense walls and heavy brick domes and towers. Nothing else is visible excepting

columns of dense smoke that rise and hang in languorous clouds above the city. I imagined great bread ovens,

and furnases smelting gold, and pomp and fanfare. But then I stopped my fantasy with the reproach that, inside, it would rather be an overwhelming peacefullness I would experiense.

My thots vacillated among different images of Paradise, but it was not long before thay became strained, attempting to hide the ever-increasing fear of an irreversible fate. Within 2 parasongs the glaring heat of the summer sun was abated by an occasional tea house, at first hovels of tin and broken timbers, but as thair numbers increased, so did thair cleanliness and



beauty, until within a half a parasong of the gates the road was lined with palasial hotels and luxuriant gardens where gorgeously adorned women and men drank spised teas and ate perfumed sweets and rich cakes. And there were great marble and onyx bath houses, and intimate shuks selling every possible kind of merchandise of the highest quality. And from every direction trailing caravans entered the golden streets.

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*Stephen Berer.*